>> Good afternoon, everyone. I hope you guys had a great time with your lunch. Your bellies are full. Maybe getting a little sleepy. We will try to wake you up a little bit. So, thank you so much for joining us. We are missing a couple members of our team. But today we have Rosabel Agbayani. [Laughing] and then we have Mariana Barquet and we have Djenne-amal Morris, Michelle who is a little bit tied up and Dr. Christine Yoshinaga-Itano. She's away on a different project so she couldn't be here with us today.

So, what we hope to accomplish with you, and you hope to take away is for you to understand some of the principles of cultural humility, identify some of the strategies to engage diverse traditionally underserved and underrepresented cultural groups and also learn the importance of the cultural and linguistic spaces. Above all, simply, what it all means is to value and honor safe spaces for members of diverse communities along with family-centered care-rooted and dignity and respect. Our planning team used this model and it's for those who participated in the AFFIRM session, which some of you are here today, I think you might remember it was our differences connect and unite us.

It is so good to see everyone. To see everybody. I am Djenne-amal Morris. Welcome, Michelle. Don't you feel like this whole time, for you first timers, we just wing it. Really. You come in late, you come nod, no shame, Michelle, but is this a busy conference for a lot of us, I'm sure as you know. So, we just, we are family here. So -- my name is Djenne-amal Morris. I am the President of -- what many I? President of the Board of headquarters for Hands & Voices. I also have my own consulting firm. I work also in the field of disability around D.E.I. Belonging, et cetera, et cetera. So why AFFIRM? I have to tell a story of course. This was our group at leadership conference at the Hands & Voices leadership conference. Janet, the director for Hands & Voices, we are talking about how do we continually build leadership? For everyone, but build leadership for either folks that are underrepresented, however you want to call it, marginalized, et cetera, et cetera. So I said well why don't we just pull together leaders of color? Note, leaders of color, pho are our leadership conference and have a time where we can talk about us, about leadership, and what it looks like for us as people of color. So I then decided ok, I knew Rosabel who said I have the perfect person, Michelle. I knew Mariana. And Ana and then Kristi who is the mama and grandma to all of us. We got on a call, just a zoom. And I got schooled. I said -- and I had written them, we shared a Google Doc and I said ok, AFFIRM. AFFIRMing all of us leaders of color. And I thought hey, you know, I'm a DEI person, I'm certified, I can teach this, I can do it in my sleep. Y'all, this one here -- said -- we have a problem with the term "leaders of color." And each person told me why. And I am telling you, it was an eye-opener for me. And it was humbling for me. And, the thought was, um, I am the only one born in America besides -- right? Besides -- no -- oh, yeah that's right. I said that purposely. No, I'm kidding. I'm teasing. But, in my head, I thought as an African American we use people of color. But you have these wonderful women here that said -- in our community, that's not what we use. And.

>> Who?

>> And this one wrote me a new one and, it was great. She said where I come from, I am only of color when I come to America. I am only a minority when I come to America. We talked for four hours and just shared our stories. And, it was humbling. It was beautiful. These are my sisters now. Before, but definitely now. Because we got to correct one another. We got to, you know, I started with me and I share that story because number one, it's so important for us to have humility. It's so important for us to be corrected, even if we think we know what we are talking about. And to listen to those that have different experiences, different voices, different coming together. And that's what we did. So that's how AFFIRM started.

One of the things I do want to note is the word "diversity." We are all diverse. But we chose at that point to only have those that identify as people that are not white to come to that group. Because we wanted to have a space that we can talk about the things that are very challenging for us, as well as ways that we can encourage one another in our leadership. It was phenomenal time, which you can go on our website and look for more.

>> Thank you, Djenne-amal. So, as she pointed out, cultural humility. You might have heard these terms. I'll let you read through them. But, cultural humility, some of the examples is, you can do -- what can we do in our institutions to provide interpretation, navigation, mediation services for limited or nonEnglish speaking individuals? So that's a good example of using that. Cultural competence, to sum it up, is to learn and honor different cultures you interact with. So these two entities together are very, very powerful and they need to exist together.' it's important for our diverse cultural community members to share their experiences and their impact on quality improvement and the conversations in these spaces like Djenne just said, help create and foster increased family engagement, trusting relationships, create community and better health outcomes.

So for example, with Hands & Voices, we have the council for Latino family support. Building resiliency against oppressive and harmful systems.

>> I think I shared how we came together. You can see that. That was at the AFFIRM group. It.

>> So, when I have a student, I am a pediatric audiologist. When I have a student, I tell my students, your pediatric appointment starts the second you say their name when you are calling them become for an appointment. You could say -- it's your appointment and they would be like I don't want to meet that person. You say Johnny, we are going to go. Are you ready? Which one's Johnny? That's excitement. That's -- you know, that's welcoming. That's so much fun and that's just sets the tone in your voice. It sets the ambiance. We did the same thing with our meeting where we welcomed people. We excitedly talked about it. We said we are going to be here. We are going to be welcoming you. We are ready for you. Open body, we were giving hugs, we set the tone with different music of -- from other, all these different cultural backgrounds and it was just a wonderful space to be in. We set the chairs in a circular way so that everybody, Deaf and Hard of Hearing people included, could see their faces, could see your body. I don't think there was one person in the room with their arms crossed like this. We were leaning forward. We were eager. We had the microphone open for everybody. So setting the tone was so important for us and letting them know I think Djenne said your voice is respected in this room. Whatever you say, we are welcoming it, taking it with our open hearts and open hands. It was wonderful welcoming, warm and just robust room. You could feel the energy. We were dancing, hugging, all working together, all on the same team.

>> Hi. I am Mariana. I am from Indiana, but I like to say I am from Mexico because that's where I was born. I say that to frame where I am coming from. So in this space, in this opportunity, you know, we are hoping to create and continue, one of the goals is, of course, supporting families with sharing information, all of the things you read there better than me because I'm half blind. But truly to kind of flip the perspective a little bit from a place where these family leaders, these professionals, these stakeholders, feel like they are a barrier, a load, to cost to the system. There is a great, you know, wealth model that I have shared with Rosabel in the past that says all these family, all these perspectives, bring value to the system. It's not only creating a space. It's not only they are sitting there occupying a chair, let's give them a chair -- no. They bring liquid gold that can be quantified. Can be used. Can benefit the system. So, welcome and opening those spaces for leaders of all colors, including mine, that apparently's neutral. But all colors -- [laughter] -- to not only feel they have a space to feel that they are valued. That their voice is needed. That they have the power to change the system with what they they contribute. One of the goals is for people that want to participate who feel they haven't been heard that are looking for their seat that they say what I say is not only going heard, it's a change. It will be a change that will stay and reactively change moving forward. That is a big piece of people saying come, participate. See what else. Share. Open your heart. Willingly. For what. Because, what you have to offer will change the way we serve our children.

>> Ok. I am going to stand up, because I am short. So -- why? What's the purpose? I have a saying that we have heard. See? That's how we help each other. Not for us. But with us. And that's why we need to do what we do. The -- and this will improve your outreach. When you aren't trying to say this is the problem, this is what we need to do. It's -- tell me what the problem is and how can we fix it together? And, this is how we learn from each other. We are, you know, diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, all of that is like buzzwords right now. You hear it whether it's in education, you hear it in healthcare, you hear it everywhere. But, it's not a buzzword. It's an action. Right? We are working toward something that is a common goal. And, the reality is -- BIPOC families need assistance from representatives that understand their culture. There's a certain comfort of being approached by someone who, whether they are a professional or they are a parent or an educator, who understands where you are coming from. And so I know that, we can't pick and choose right now, but that's why we need to encourage our younger people to enter these fields. Audiologists. Teachers of the deaf. Administrators. That's how we are going to see change when they are part of the system rather than being told they are the problem of the system.

And making sure that accommodations are set up.

A lot of times, and I can speak for myself, is sometimes we are in spaces that are not created for us and so I think it's, you know, it's really important to create the space with the intention that it is for you and is it with you. And seeking collaboration with other community partners, whether it's in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community or not. I think really trying to partner and to improve support in getting information out there, is really going to improve outreach.

>> All right. My whole entire life I have been on fringe of am I Chinese? American? Am I a patient? Am I a professional? I think that's code-switching. I have had to adapt to all these different cultures and then I also realized in the last few years I also -- yeah, am I a patient? Am I a professional? Which one am I? I have been in a -- I grew up in a very artist type of audiology clinic. And now, there's more out there. I need that Deaf and Hard of Hearing community as much as I do. What do I need to do? I need to share my experiences so that we can have change. That's part of outreach in supporting those in those minority groups so that we feel comfortable. So that we can voice our concerns, so then we can get to solutions and actually implement them.

>> One of the things, I am standing up because we will take some comments and questions. -- I got it. I can be Oprah. Many -- is that -- we wanted it set an example for our own children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, for the families, but not only within the cultures that we represent. Within every culture. Because, as important as it is for our children to see us, as important it is for our Deaf and Hard of Hearing children to see Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults and mentors, it's important for the whole community to see that these are some smart, intelligent, articulate, amazing women that have been through -- we have raised our children -- we are raising our children. But that we have an experience that is unique and that we can be a resource. So that's one of the reasons we also came together and are staying together so that we can be a resource. We have 10 minutes and I would love comments. Just to open it up for questions. From us.

>> Just a quick shout out. There's more information if you want to continue this conversation tomorrow, as well.

>> Yes. And another commercial break -- before I forget. There's a munch and mingle with the REAL group for Black and brown EHDI professionals today. 5:45 to 7:30 at, in Room 262. And if you have questions, you can see my friend, Leslie. Ok. Comments? Questions? Thoughts?

>> If you want to get on the e-mail list or talk about this more, come to my group. Group number 4 from the right, with all of --

>> Shameless plug. All right. Come on. This is time to ask any question you would like.

>> Hi, everybody. My name is Chelsea. I am from Connecticut. I work at the American School for the deaf. And, as you can imagine, being from Connecticut, I am more often than not the only chocolate in the room. And, as I am discovering and I have just started this job as the statewide family support coordinator, we have, although our campus is quite diverse, there's still a lot of white people on campus. And I am finding that those in positions of power, while they do listen, they have their own agendas. And, I don't feel like my voice is not being heard. However, I do feel like it's being put on the back burner. And while I understand that I am new to this culture and new to this community, I guess -- how do -- how do I move forward in making sure that my voice is being heard? Because I feel like I can speak for some of our students, some of our families, especially mothers. I am a mother myself, although my son is hearing. You know, we still will deal with the same challenges. Teens are not always fun. Let me tell you that. But I guess -- like I said, you know, how do you make your voice being heard when you feel so low on the totem pole?

>> I started an Instagram account, Mama Hu Hears. Oh, my gosh. 25 people cared. It was one foot in front of the other. If you feel small one day, be small. If you feel amazing, share it. And find people. Connect with them. Build your muscle. It just takes practice. Keep on going. Hey, this matters to me. You matter. You know what? Someone could benefit from this. If someone benefits from one minute of vulnerability from you, isn't that worth it? Isn't that worth it? So, just start sharing. Keep on sharing. Open your mouth.

>> Coming from my perspective, ok, you just don't give up. We don't have that benefit. From my community. The last one standing is the one that wins. And my kids laugh at me oh, there goes my mother. My daughter will be there tomorrow. You can hear her say there goes my mother. Ana said you have to be more Mexican than the Mexicans and more Americans than the Americans. Truly what that means is you have to work 50% harder than anyone else to be heard. Is it pretty? Easy? No. Nothing's easy. Making enchiladas is hard. Who cares? You can rest, but do not give up.

>> Well, I have a son. He is 15 years old now. And I just want to share how important it is to be proud of your diversity. Because, he grew up in a very middle-class, white neighborhood. And he went to school there. And all that time, I was so worried about him being the only deaf child. That I was making sure he knew how to use his FM, how to take care of his hearing aids and oh, man, you know, I was on him like a helicopter and when he went to middle school, we decided to, well we moved, so he was going to a different school. And a totally different setting. A very diverse population. And, the first day of middle school, I said -- hey, so how was school? And he goes -- I go did you use your FM? How are the teachers? He goes mom, mom, I got this. I know I'm deaf. I know how to take care of my hearing aids. Chill. But did you know I'm Filipino? [Laughter] I went -- yeah. And it was an eye-opener. It was like I, all this time I was focusing on how he was different and I was like -- the obvious was what really meant to him. And so, you know, it goes back to are we looking at the people? At who we are and what's important to news is because what looks important may not be. I mean -- families everywhere are struggling for different reasons. Right? You know. We have, you know, multiple things going on in our life. At the same time. And sometimes that hearing part or that audiology appointment or the speech appointment or your, you know, IEP meeting is not going to be the priority. Maybe it's getting food on the table. And we have to respect that. And, treat people with dignity. And know that everybody struggles and it's ok.

>> We have -- time for maybe one and a half questions.

>> Any plans to open this up to professionals?

>> Yeah.

>> But the whole training. Like I want the whole day.

>> Put that in the evaluation.

>> Ok.

>> Yeah. Just to let y'all know, we have been asking ourselves what do we do next? What do we do next? Ok, we got to leadership. Let's get to EHDI and then -- but we, we are going to open this up. Because it's so needed for all of us. And so, just stay tuned.

>> And not because there aren't opportunities for leadership, but I rarely have an opportunity to sit with nonwhite people in a session.

>> Not today, girl.

>> I will be there. You know what? I am just going to say this because the minute you read it, Black and brown. I was like -- am I brown enough to go to this?

>> Are you asking me?

>> No I was thinking that to myself.

>> But just to add to that, we rarely get to take up our space. And when we do take up our space, it's very limited. And spaces like this, like AFFIRM -- we were able to take up as much space as we wanted and use it however we felt it was needed to be used. And so that's the importance of having sessions like AFFIRM. Right? Most often you are the only one in the room and that space you are taking up feels very limited. You aren't able to stretch out what you want or how you want to do it.

>> Which is why my new daughter over here, you are feeling that. Because, can I open -- can I take space? And that is -- that is something we get. You don't have to explain it. And we will help you and teach you how to take space and you can blame us. Ok. One more.

>> I'll come this way. I'll come to you.

>> So, I have two boys. An 18-year-old and a 15-year-old, who are both deaf. Obviously white, as they get. And my husband is Hispanic. So -- I always feel like they already have, because they wear Cochlear implants maybe sometimes the deaf community doesn't obviously accept them enough because they wear Cochlear implants. But then now it also comes into play while, are they white? Hispanic? So we kind of have a lot going on. And I don't know, maybe always how to handle that aspect of it. Because I'm obviously not Hispanic. People always ask do your children -- because my husband, his whole family speaks Spanish and they ask do your kids know how to speak Spanish? I had to get them to people English first. Because of having implants. I feel that's an added struggle to their lives as being deaf and wearing Cochlear implants.

>> I am going to -- easy answer -- you teach them to be proud to be deaf hard of hearing, white Hispanic. Boom. There's no disadvantage to any of that. Drop the mic.

>> I was going to say really quickly, because I come from, you know, my home is bilingual. Biethnic. We are the same. When I say this in a presentation, when we have fights about having Tuesday taco dinner or steak and potatoes and my deaf son says -- mom, stop arguing. Just put the steak and the potatoes in the taco! They are a new generation. They are not me and they aren't my husband. They are a beautiful new generation that will find their space. But I know exactly the struggle. And I see you and I hear you. I don't care if you are blond and paler, who cares. You are here and that matters.

>> Thank you all for coming. We are around. You can see our e-mails. Please feel free to e-mail us, call us, we are, again a resource for all. Thank you for coming.